

## The effects of COVID-19 on small and medium-sized enterprises: empirical evidence from Jordan

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*Journal of Enterprising Communities*; 2021.

Article in English | Scopus | ID: covidwho-1437880

### Purpose:

The ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in sudden changes in the macro environment and market behaviour, making most enterprises urgently reconfigure their business models to cope with changes following the COVID-19 outbreak. This paper aims to present empirical data on the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), highlighting the initial conclusions regarding their crisis management. It presents factual data on how SMEs in Jordan can use entrepreneurship to combat uncertainty and promote new opportunities. Design/methodology/

### approach:

This study involves an exploratory qualitative research design, drawing from 32 semi-structured interviews of key informants from Jordanian SMEs in different stages of the crisis. The different coping strategies of the SMEs and their effectiveness in the first six months of the pandemic are then compared.

### Findings:

The findings show how Jordanian SMEs have adapted to cope with the changes in the business environment because of COVID-19. These strategies include modifying their operations that is moving from an ordinary business model to more tentative digitalisation, improving internal communication and restructuring ad hoc organisational culture. Originality/value The study presents important and timely implications for managers of Jordanian SMEs and policymakers by increasing the sensitisation and awareness of SMEs' coping mechanisms. It is the first study in management that empirically analyses the impact of COVID-19 on Jordanian SMEs. © 2021, Emerald Publishing Limited.